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REMARKS

Claims 2-3 amend all the claims presently pending in the application. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 2-3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 2-3 have been amended in a manner believed fully responsive to all points raised by the Examiner, thereby to pass all of the claims to allowance. No new matter has been added.

It is noted that the claim amendments herein are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims, or for any statutory requirements of patentability.

Further, it is noted that, notwithstanding any claim amendments made herein, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements, even if amended herein or later during prosecution.

FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

Regarding the Examiner's objection to the drawings and specifically to Figures 10(a)-12 as not being labeled "Prior Art", Applicants submit that these Figures are not prior art against the claims of the present application. Indeed, these Figures represent "Related Art" which was not necessarily published or known outside the confines of Hitachi Kokusai Electric, Inc., at the time of filing of the underlying priority document or the present application. It is noted that the present application was careful not to refer to these Figures in the specification as "Prior Art", but instead refers to them as "Related Art". Thus, to label Figures 10(a)-12 as "Prior Art" would be erroneous.

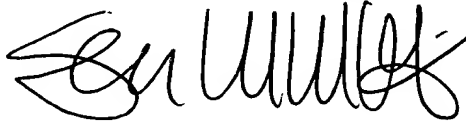
Serial No.: 09/819,600
Docket No. KOKUSAI066
ORI.036

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In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 2-3, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees or to credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully submitted,



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